

Dietary supplements

Dietary or **nutritional** supplementation has become quite common over the past few years and the trend will continue. This has partially been **driven by** the global increase in vegetarianism and veganism.

While a plant-based diet is healthy, a lack of B-vitamins, obtainable in animal products, is of major concern in exclusively vegetarian and vegan diets. It is **not just a question of** B-vitamins. Minerals such as **iron**, calcium and magnesium play a major role in bone, nerve and general health. What sounds so simple is a really complex **interplay** between vitamins and minerals, and **countless** processes in the body. Magnesium for example, is involved in over

300 different biochemical processes. And that's just one mineral!

Female pharmacy customer: Hello, do you speak English?

PTA: How may I help you?

I visited my doctor for my regular check-up, and she recommended that I take vitamin D₃. She did a full **blood count** last week and discovered that my vitamin D levels are low.

Do you mind me asking if you are pregnant?

Please ask what you need to ask. I'm in the middle of the second trimester.

Has your doctor recommended any other supplements?

Well, I'm taking iron supplements, as my iron was also quite low. And I have been taking **folate** supplements since before I got pregnant. She recommended that I still take them during the pregnancy.

Have you had any problems with the iron supplements?

No. Why?

Some iron tablets can cause constipation and that is not very pleasant during pregnancy.

No, I have no problems there! I eat a **fibre-rich** diet, and make sure to get lots of vitamin C-rich foods, as I read

somewhere that this helps with the absorption and **utilization** of iron.

You have certainly done your homework!

Thank goodness for the internet.

You said that you eat a lot of vitamin-C-rich foods, you are not a vegetarian or vegan, are you?

Not quite. Is there something that I should know?

I asked because vegetarians and vegans tend to have **zinc deficiency**, which is not good for **fetal development**.

While I do eat a lot of vegetarian dishes, I also eat fish, beef and chicken regularly, and I love omelettes with lots of fresh herbs.

Have you thought about magnesium?

I almost forgot: Said that I should take magnesium supplements.

And you are not taking any calcium supplements, are you? You see some calcium supplements also contain magnesium. And too much magnesium is neither good for you nor for your baby.

No, I don't take calcium supplements. I know that magnesium is good for leg cramps.

Magnesium is involved in bone tissue development in the foetus and in your own body. It can also promote restful sleep during pregnancy and while breast-feeding.

Good, so I'll take the D₃ and the magnesium and see how I get on. Thank you for being so patient with me!

No, problem. I know, from personal experience, that you have to think twice before taking anything during pregnancy.

Thank you. Goodbye. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

dietary supplements	Nahrungsergänzungsmittel
nutritional	Ernährungs-
driven by	angetrieben durch
not just a question of	nicht nur eine Frage von
iron	Eisen
interplay	Zusammenspiel
countless	unzählige
blood count	Blutbild
pregnant	schwanger
folate	Folsäure
constipation	Obstipation, Verstopfung
fibre-rich	ballaststoffreich
utilization	(hier) Verwertung
zinc deficiency	Zinkmangel
fetal development	Fetalentwicklung



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